

Senate-passed Republican Budget

A Summary of Floor Amendments

On April 7, the Senate approved the Concurrent Resolution on the Budget for FY 2001 on a 51-45 vote. A conference meeting — hosted by the House — is scheduled for Tuesday morning. Democratic conferees are Senators Lautenberg, Conrad, and Wyden. Republican conferees are Senators Domenici, Grassley, Bond and Gorton. The Republicans hope to file the conference report Tuesday night, go to the House floor Wednesday, and complete final passage on the Senate floor by Thursday, April 13th. This is an ambitious set of deadlines that may be hard to meet.

This fact sheet summarizes the major amendments adopted on the Senate floor. (It does not include a summary of the numerous Sense of the Senate resolutions.) A final tally of the budget numbers is not possible at this time because of numerous errors in the drafting of major amendments. The resolution, for example, contains three sets of estimates for the allowances function¹ and the function totals do not add to the totals in the budget. Although the resolution reduced the on-budget surplus, the surplus totals are actually larger than the SBC-reported budget. These errors and inconsistencies will presumably be corrected in conference.

The major numerical changes approved on the floor include:

- ***Defense.*** Senator McCain offered an amendment approved on a 99-0 vote that increased funding for the defense function by \$28 million over the period 2000-2005 for military personnel who are now on food stamps. An amendment offered by Senators Stevens and Warner, which passed on voice vote, added another \$4 billion in budget authority and \$2 billion in outlays to the defense function in 2001. These higher levels were reflected in subsequent language sections setting forth new discretionary levels and defense firewalls.
- ***Pell Grants.*** A Kennedy amendment reduced the tax cut by \$2.7 billion over five years and increased funding for Pell Grants in the education function. The amendment passed on a 51-49 vote.
- ***Coast Guard funding.*** A DeWine amendment, which passed by voice vote, increased budget authority and outlays for the transportation function by \$700 million in 2001 and increased unspecified cuts in the allowances function by equal amounts. The amendment was later modified by Senator Domenici and the amounts were reduced to \$300 million in both budget authority and outlays for FY 2001.
- ***Hurricane Floyd.*** An amendment offered by Senators Torricelli, Edwards, Lautenberg, and

¹The Allowances function contains unspecified or unallocated cuts in discretionary spending. The current total for the period 2000-2005 exceeds \$150 billion.

Robb, increased economic aid to communities rebuilding from Hurricane Floyd by \$250 million over the period 2001-2005. These funds were not offset.

- ***Gun Control.*** An amendment offered by Senator Durbin increased budget authority and outlays in the Justice function by \$284 million over the next five years and offset those increases with higher revenues to pay for gun control legislation. A second degree offered by Senator Craig was supposed to replace this amendment, but was incorrectly drafted, and ended up increasing revenues by \$1 each year over the period 2001-2005 and further revising the allowances function.
- ***NIH.*** An amendment offered by Senator Specter approved by voice vote increased funding for NIH by \$1.6 billion in budget authority and outlays in the health function and offset the increase with unspecified cuts in the allowances function. This amendment also increased the nondefense totals “envisioned” in the reserve fund by \$1.6 billion, pending the increase of the statutory spending limits.
- ***IDEA.*** Senator Jeffords offered an amendment that passed on a voice vote, that increased funding for IDEA (contained in the education function) by \$31 billion. His amendment was replaced, however, with a substitute offered by Senator Voinovich which reduced the IDEA adds in each year to \$1.
- ***VA health.*** Senator Johnson offered an amendment approved on a voice vote that increased discretionary spending in the veterans function by \$500 million a year in budget authority and outlays and offset the costs by increasing revenues by the same amounts. This amendment was modified in a second degree by Senator Craig to increase revenues by only \$1 each year and to offset the remaining amounts of the new spending with unspecified cuts in the allowances function.

The major language changes on the floor included:

- ***Reserve for additional surplus.*** A Kohl-Leahy amendment, which passed by voice vote, struck the reserve fund that automatically reserved any additional CBO surpluses for more tax cuts. Senator Kohl’s intention was to preserve the extra surplus for debt reduction but Senator Domenici noted that the original language would be added back in conference.
- ***Reserve Fund for Early Learning and Parent Support Programs.*** An amendment offered by Senators Stevens and Kennedy established a new reserve fund for early learning that allows resolution allocations and aggregates to be revised for legislation reported from the Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions as long as the legislation does not cost more than \$8.5 billion in budget authority and the outlays resulting therefrom through 2005, or cause an on-budget deficit.
- ***Emergency point of order.*** Senator Stevens offered an amendment that passed on voice vote, which exempted defense spending from the point of order against emergency

designations.

- ***Reserve Fund for Military Retiree Health Care.*** An amendment offered by Senator Johnson and modified by Senator Domenici (both on voice votes) created a reserve fund for military retiree health care that allows resolution aggregates and totals to be revised for legislation reported from the Senate Committee on Armed Services that would help create programs for military retirees and their dependents. There is no limit on the cost of the legislation as long as it does not cause an on-budget deficit for fiscal year 2001 or the period of fiscal years 2001 through 2005.
- ***Advanced appropriations.*** An amendment offered by Senator Stevens and approved on a voice vote, increased the amounts by which appropriations can include advance appropriations from \$14.2 billion to \$23 billion.
- ***Delayed obligation.*** This language was modified to exclude appropriations in the defense category and appropriations considered recurring or customary.

Prepared by Senate Budget Committee Democratic Staff
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